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## A MUHAMMADAN COMMENTARY ON MAIMONIDES' MISHNEH TORAH.

### CHS. I—IV.

#### A.

IN the present article an effort will be made to give a sufficiently adequate account of an interesting Arabic Commentary on the first few chapters of Maimonides' great legal code. Some references to this Commentary are found in *Hebräische Bibliographie* (המכיר) for 1858 (p. 21) and 1863 (p. 16), also in Professor Steinschneider's Bodleian Catalogue, col. 1442, and on p. 38 of the same author's *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*. A more recent mention of this work is made in Prof. Steinschneider's "Introduction to the Arabic Literature of the Jews" (*J. Q. R.*, XII, p. 500). But a complete account of the Commentary has to my knowledge never been given before, nor has the Muhammadan persuasion of its author been duly recognized by any previous writer on the subject<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Steinschneider is inclined to treat Sa'id ibn Dā'ūd, who distinctly asserts the Ishmaelite origin of Al-Muwaḥḥit, as a suspected witness, for the same Sa'id had "published a work of Gazzali with a new title as his own work" (*J. Q. R.*, XII, p. 500). From Dr. Neubauer's description of the Oxford MS. containing Gazzali's work (*Cat.*, No. 1338), one does not gather the impression that he prefers the same charge against Sa'id; but there is also the St. Petersburg MS. to be considered. Anyhow, the charge of plagiarism does not apply in the present case, the composition of this Commentary being ascribed not to himself, but to some one else. The present writer would, indeed, like to gain Professor Steinschneider's favourable consideration on behalf of both Sa'id and Al-Muwaḥḥit.

The reasons for regarding 'Alā ud-Dīn al-Muwakkīt as a Muhammadan are the following:—

1. The cognomen Al-Muwakkīt, signifying as it does one who occupies the post of time-keeper at a mosque, is itself almost sufficient to prove the Muhammadan persuasion of its owner; for no one will seriously maintain that such a title was likely to have been adopted by a family or individual of the Jewish persuasion.

2. It must be specially noted that 'Alā ud-Dīn only deals with those פירקים of the ספר המדע which are of a general philosophico-theological nature. The presumption, therefore, is that specifically Jewish theology as such had no sufficient interest for him, or that he lacked the qualifications necessary for dealing with that subject. All that is contained in the first four paragraphs of the ספר המדע is, in fact, in its essence, quite as much a piece of Muhammadan as of Jewish theology, and the limits of the Commentary would clearly find a proper explanation in the Muhammadan religious position of its author.

3. Another reason favouring this supposition is to be found in 'Alā ud-Dīn's manner of quoting Muhammadan authors, as will be shown in detail further on. It will hardly be considered likely that a Jewish writer would add *רָאָע* (i. e. *رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ*, "may God show favour unto him"), *קִדַּם אֱלֹהֵי רוּחָהּ* ("may God sanctify his spirit"), or any similar phrase after the name of a Muhammadan author. Custom would have dictated the omission of the remark, notwithstanding even a great amount of liberal thought on the author's part. Such an omission would, in fact, not necessarily betoken religious illiberality; whereas the addition of the benedictory phrase may be taken as a clear indication that the author shares the religious persuasion of those he mentions.

4. The scribe, himself a careful and scholarly investigator<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Sa'id ibn Dā'ūd claims our respect as a scholarly compiler of great zeal and industry. The call, "O ye sleeping ones, awake," at the end of his colophon to the present MS. is clearly the spontaneous and serious

to whose industry we are indebted for a considerable portion of this interesting MS., clearly regarded 'Alā ud-Dīn as a Muhammadan, or rather—which is more decisive still—as an Ishmaelite. For it will be seen later on<sup>1</sup> that he contrasts the author, whom he designates as “one of the Ishmaelites, who are not charged with these obligations,” with the Israelites whose duty it is to observe the commandments. If any strong reason could be put forward against the view held in the fifteenth century by the Yemenite scholar who found an interesting codex of the Commentary at Aleppo in the handwriting<sup>2</sup> of a descendant of Maimonides himself, one should, of course, be obliged to follow evidence rather than authority; but this is a case in which independent inquiry not only fully corroborates the opinion held by the scribe, but would by itself be perfectly sufficient to establish the same view.

I must, however, before proceeding further meet an objection which might be made by students who may have given some attention to the MS. without having had the leisure for a thorough examination of its contents. It will be noticed that when Jewish authorities, such as Ibn Ezra and Tanḥum Yerushalmi, are quoted in the work, the customary addition ל' or ל' after the name is never

utterance of a mind zealously working for the resuscitation of learning in his day. The British Museum possesses an autograph copy of his Arabic Midrashic Commentary on Exodus (Or. 2785). At the Bodleian Library, where the whole of his work on the Pentateuch is preserved, is also found his Commentary on the second, third, and tenth books of Maimonides' משה חורו; and it may here be remarked that a plagiarist would probably have been tempted also to issue Al-Muwaḥḥit's Commentary under his own name. Sa'īd is also the author of some liturgical pieces, and of notes on the Calendar (Neub., *Cat.*, No. 1632 a and b). A work on music and other subjects in Arabic copied by him is among the Museum Cairo Collection.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 497.

<sup>2</sup> If the view advocated here is correct, the work must have been originally written in the Arabic character, and copied out later in Hebrew writing.

missing. This, therefore, would seem completely to neutralize what has been said under No. 3 in favour of 'Alā ud-Dīn's Muhammadan persuasion. A more careful perusal of the MS., however, shows clearly that the work in its present form has passed through the hands of at least one Jewish redactor, and nothing is more justifiable than the inference that the quotations from Jewish writers were added by such a redactor. In several places the redactor, after having inserted additions of his own, says plainly enough: "Let us now return to the words of the Commentator<sup>1</sup>." Other evidences of redaction are the pieces embodied in the work under the heading חאשיה (i.e. marginal annotation), so e.g. on foll. 212 a, 222 a. No manner of doubt can therefore be entertained on this point. It is possible that David han-Nagid, fifth in descent from Moses Maimonides, who had written out the codex found by Sa'id ibn Dā'ūd at Aleppo, was himself the redactor or one of the redactors. Another possibility is that Sa'id ibn Dā'ūd was a redactor of the Commentary. In any case, it is certain that in its present form the Commentary is much longer than it originally was, and that Jewish scholarship has later on permeated the original composition of 'Alā ud-Dīn al-Muwakkīt.

From what has been said it also follows that no evidence can be brought forward in favour of the view that 'Alā ud-Dīn may have been an author of Jewish descent who had left the Synagogue for the Mosque. The only argument in favour of this theory might be found in the quotations from Jewish writers contained in the Commentary. But the certainty of there having been at least one later redaction of the work is fatal to this use being made of the Jewish portions embodied in it. It is much more likely that when 'Alā ud-Dīn in the opening sentences of his Commentary designates Moses Maimonides as al-Isrā'īlī, "the Israelite," he meant to differentiate his own

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 501, 506.

Ishmaelitish descent from the people to whom the author of his text belonged <sup>1</sup>.

## B.

I may now proceed to describe the MS. in which the Commentary under consideration is contained. The material used is paper, and the dimensions are about 6½ in. by 5 in. There are 273 leaves. Foll. 2 b–109 b have seventeen to nineteen, foll. 124–133 a mostly twenty-two, and the rest seventeen lines to a page. The quires consist (partly, at any rate) of ten leaves each, as is shown by the signatures preserved in the latter portion of the MS. (e. g. יט in the right-hand upper corner of fol. 164 a, כ, fol. 174 a, &c.). The writing has suffered much through damp, especially in the upper parts of the pages; and it is on this account often impossible to read two consecutive pages without a break. Three different oriental hands are observable in the MS., one of the scribes having been Sa'id ibn Dā'ūd <sup>2</sup>. It was written in the third quarter of the fifteenth century.

As has already been indicated in section A, the codex contains an Arabic Commentary on the first four פרקים of Maimonides' ספר המדע (first book of משנה תורה) by an Arab (or, at any rate, Muhammadan) writer of the name 'Alā ud-Dīn al-Muwakkīt, with various additions by at least one Jewish redactor of the work.

The first פרק begins on fol. 2 b, the second on fol. 47 a, the third on fol. 55 a, and the fourth on fol. 161 b.

The opening remarks on the first פרק may serve as a specimen to indicate the philosophical thoroughness with which 'Alā ud-Dīn approached his task. It will be noticed that Maimonides' text appears here in an Arabic form.

<sup>1</sup> The possibility of 'Alā ud-Dīn having been a Muhammadan of Jewish descent in the second or third generation may be freely entertained. Evidence is, however, lacking.

<sup>2</sup> A considerable part of the MS. shows great similarity to MS. Or. 2785, which is clearly an autograph of Sa'id ibn Dā'ūd.

Add. 27,294, fol. 2<sup>b</sup> sqq.

בשם יי' אל עולם

שרה פרק ראשון מספר המדע ללשיך עלאי<sup>1</sup> ארדין אלמוות קאל  
אלפצל אלואל מן אלגו' אלואל מן כלאם אלסייד אלגל אלחבר אלפצל  
אבו אלעמראן מוסי אלקורטבי אלסראלי פי אלעלום אלאהיה<sup>2</sup> קולה  
אסאם אלסאסאסא ועמוד אלחכם אן יעלם אן חם מונוד אול מונוד לנמיע  
אלמונודאט וגמיע אלמונודאט מן סמא וארץ ומוא תכללהמא אנמא פאץ  
וגודאט ען חקיקה וגודאט תע' ואן כטר באלבאל אנה גיר מונוד פארחתע  
וגוד מא סואה ואן כטר באל בארפע אלעאלם גמיעה כאן תע' מע  
הרא אלפרץ מונודא' לא יתני' ולא יבטל וגודאט לבטלאן וגודאט לאן  
גמיע אלמונודאט<sup>2</sup> מפתקרה אליה והו גני' ען אלמונודאט<sup>2</sup> גמיעהא<sup>2</sup>

אקול<sup>2</sup> אעלם אן אלחכמה סוא כאנת נטרייה או עמלייה ואל חכמה  
אל נטרייה סוא כאנת טבעייה או ריאצייה או אלאהיה וכרא אלחכמה  
אלעמלייה סוא כאנת כלקיייה או מנוליה או מדנייה פאן אסאם אלגמיע  
מערפה ואגב אלוגוד ונביין [fol. 3 a] דלך פנקול אנה מא לם יערף אן תם ואגב  
וגוד מונוד ללכל וירצ' אחר טרפי' אלממכן אעני וגודאט עלי עדמה אד  
לא יגו אן יוגד אל שי נפסה ואיצא מא לם יערף אן תם מונוד אול  
מונוד ען אלמואר בסיט אלבסאטא אלמחצה ואחד חק באלפעל מן כל  
ונה ואן לא שי פיה באלקוה אלבתה ואן תם עקול מגרדה ען אלמואר  
כאמלה באלפעל מנקושה' פיהא צור אלמונודאט ואלעואלם גמיעהא הי מבאדי  
אלמונודאט וינבוע אלכיראט ואן אלחשבה בהא אעני אלגמיעהא בחקאיק  
אלמונודאט ואל תכלק באלאכלאק אלגמילה אלחמידה וחסן תדביר אלגמיעהא  
מנולה וגמיל מעאשרתה לאהלה וכרא חסן סימסתה לאהל בלדה הו  
אלכמאל אלגמיעהא בחסב טאקתה אלבשרייה לם יכון מטלובא' הרא  
אלכמאל לדאטתה ולא מהרובא' ען צדה אלדי הו אלנקן אעני אלנהל  
אלבסיט<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The ' at the end of the word represents the *hamzah*; in Arabic letters علا.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes ħ, and sometimes n. The irregularities of the MS. in this and other matters are reproduced in the printed text.

TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>.

"A Commentary on the first Péreḳ of the Séfer ham-Madda' by the Shaikh 'Alā ud-Dīn al-Muwakkīt."

Then follows the first Péreḳ in Arabic, introduced by the following words: "Says the first chapter of the first part of the metaphysical disquisition of the great master and eminent doctor Abu al-'Imrān Mūsā al-Ḳurṭubī the Israelite."

The Commentary on this Péreḳ begins as follows:—

"I say, Know thou that science is either theoretical or practical. Theoretical science, moreover, is either Physics, Mathematics, or Metaphysics. Thus also is practical science either Ethics, Economics, or Politics. Also know that the foundation of all science is the knowledge of the necessarily existing One. We shall explain this, and say that so long as one does not apprehend that there is a necessarily existing One, who calls all things into existence, one of the two contingencies of the possibly existing would outbalance the other<sup>2</sup>, namely existence [would outbalance] non-existence, since it is not possible that anything should call itself into existence. Moreover, so long as one does not apprehend that there is a first existing One, entirely devoid of matter, of the utmost simplicity<sup>3</sup>, One of perfect reality in every aspect, and that no [material] thing whatever is [even] virtually contained in it; and that furthermore there are intelligences entirely devoid of matter, really perfect, on which are impressed the forms of all [created] existences and worlds, these intelligences being the first of [created] existences and the source of all that is good; and that human perfection (so far as such is possible to mortal beings) consists in likeness to these [intelligences], namely in receiving the impress of the realities of existences, and in

<sup>1</sup> The translations offered here should be regarded as merely tentative. An authoritative rendering could, in fact, only be produced by one well versed in the thought and the phraseology of Graeco-Arabic philosophy. Also the linguistic peculiarities of the Arabic are left to be dealt with by other hands.

<sup>2</sup> The sense is, apparently, that, logically speaking, אִלְמַמְכִּין (the possible) must lie exactly in the middle between "being" and "not-being"; but by denying a self-existent creative agency which causes "being" to outweigh "not-being," the right logical balance of the "possible" is upset, for one side would then outweigh the other. It is likely, however, that the right reading of the text is עִרְבָה עַל יְהִיָּה, "non-existence would outbalance existence, since it is not possible that anything should call itself into existence."

<sup>3</sup> "Uniformity" would, perhaps, be a better word.



acquiring a nature that is beautiful and noble, and a pleasant and good manner of treating the people of one's household as well as a noble way of dealing with the people of one's community: then [if all this is not realized] perfection would neither be attracted by that which is in essence akin to it, nor would it be repelled by the opposite, namely that which is identical with defect, namely utter ignorance."

The Commentary ends as follows:—

ולیکن הוא אֶזְכֹּר מֵאֲשֶׁר בִּשְׂרָחָה אֶלְחָבֵר אֶלְפָּאֶל וְאֶלְצָדֵר אֶלְכָּאֵמֶל  
בְּקִיָּיָה אֶלְסֶלֶף וְקִדּוּהָ אֶלְכֶלֶף: בְּהָא אֶלְדּוּלָה וְעֵמִיד אֶלְמֶלֶה אֶלְאִסְרָאִילִיָּה  
אֶלְמוּסוּיָּה מִן אֶלְפָּצוֹל אֶלְתִּי וְצִעָה גֵּד אֶלְמִדְכוּר וְסִלְפָּה אֶלְצָאֵלָה אֶלְסִיִּיד אֶלְעָאֵלָם  
אֶלְפִּילְסוֹף אֶלְכָּאֵמֶל אֲבוֹ אֶלְעֵמְרָאֵן מוּסִי אֶלְקֶרְטָבִי נְזוֹר אֶלְלָה צִרְיָחָה עֲלִי  
אֲנִי וְאֵן כִּנֵּת פִּי שִׂרָחָה הִדָּה אֶלְפָּצוֹל קֵד פֶּרַעַת אֶלְפָּרֻעַ וְאֶצֶּלֶת אֶלְאֶצוֹל  
וְלִם . . . פִּי דֶאֱלֶךְ אֶלָּא בְּדִלְאֵלְתָּהּ<sup>1</sup> (וּמָא אֲנִתְרַפֵּת דֶּאֱלֶךְ אֶלָּא בְּדִלְאֵלְתָּהּ)<sup>1</sup>  
וּמָא אֲנִתְרַפֵּת אֶלָּא מִן פְּצִאֲלָתָּהּ:

וְאִנִּי וְאֵן כִּנֵּת אֶקְתַּבְסַּתָּהּ מִן בֵּין יְדִידָה: פֶּאֲנִי לְמָא לִם אֲגֵד אֶהֱלָא"  
לָה נִזְרִיה עֲדַת בֵּה אֵלִיָּה: שַׁעֲרֵי פֶאֲנִי וְאֵן אֶצְבַּחַת לֶאֱלֹדֵר גִּאֲלִבָּא: וְחֶקֶךְ  
לִם אֶעֱלֶמָה אֶלָּא אֵלִי אֶלְבַּחֵר: וְאֶלְמֶרְגֵּן מִן אַחְסָאֵן מִן יֶקֶף עֲלִי הִדָּה  
אֶלְשִׁרָחָה: אֵן יִלְחָצָה בְּעִין אֶלְעָפּוֹ וְאֶלְצַפָּח: פֶּאֵן אֶלְאֲנִסְאֵן לֹא יִנְפֵר עֵן  
נִסְיָאֵן: וְאֶלְקֶלֶם לֹא בֵּד לָה מִן טִנְיָאֵן: וְלָלָה אֶלְקָאִיל פֶּעִין אֶלְרִצָּא עֵן כָּל  
עֵיב כְּלִילִיָּה: וְלִכֵּן עֵין אֶלְסַכְט תְּבָרִי אֶלְמִסְאֻיָּא: תִּם דֶּאֱלֶךְ וְכוּ'

Let this then be the last remark taken from the references found in the Commentary of the eminent doctor and perfect leader<sup>2</sup>, the last [great one] of the past and the example of posterity, the splendour of his generation and pillar of the Israelitish Mosaic religion, to the chapters composed by his grandfather<sup>3</sup> and predecessor, the upright and learned master, the perfect philosopher Abu al-'Imrān Mūsā al-Ḳurṭubī, may God illumine his sepulchre; for as for me, though I have in the Commentary on these chapters grouped the various divisions (or branches) and determined the

<sup>1</sup> Omit this sentence. It is evidently due to a double dittography, taken in part from the preceding sentence and in part from the following one.

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to translate דָּר differently in this place.

<sup>3</sup> 'Alā ud-Dīn refers here to a quotation made by him from a descendant (grandson) of Maimonides, but the piece from Abraham son of Maimonides, given below on p. 502, is the last quotation of this kind.

principles, I have only . . . by his guidance (and have only drawn it by his guidance<sup>1</sup>), and have only drawn from his abundance.

And behold, I, having acquired [such understanding] from him, and finding no one to equal him, I return therewith to him. *Poem*:—And I, if I have drawn up pearls (?) early, I surely will only yield them up to the sea<sup>2</sup>. And what is desired of the goodness of any reader of this Commentary is that he should regard it with an eye of forgiveness and condoning. For behold, man cannot escape forgetfulness, and the reed (or pen) cannot but err. And true is the saying<sup>3</sup> that the favourable eye is free from all blame, but the eye of discontent reveals the blemishes. Finished is this, &c.

A full statement of the quotations from Muhammadan writers embodied in the work must not be expected in this place, but the following examples are chosen as bearing on the argument contained in section A:—

On fol. 59 a:—

וקאל איצא אל שׁיך נציר אל דין אל טוסי ראע פי כיפ״ה צדור אל  
כתרה ען ואנב אל וגור וען אל עקול פי שרח אל אשׁראת<sup>4</sup>

On fol. 60 b:—

פצל מן אל תלויחאת ללשיך שהאב אל דין אל סהרורדי<sup>5</sup> קדם אללה רוחה  
ושרחה ללשיך אל אמאם אל עלאמה עז אל דולה בן כמונה<sup>6</sup> סקא אללה  
צובה אל זמאם

The correct reading is, no doubt, 'וכו' סקאה אללה וכו' "May God shower down upon him the abundance of his

<sup>1</sup> This sentence appears to be due to dittography; see the note on the text.

<sup>2</sup> Pearls gained from the sea are here compared to knowledge gained from a great thinker.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, "and to God who says."

<sup>4</sup> For printed editions of Avicenna's *Isharat* and Commentary, see A. G. Ellis, *Cat. of Arabic Books in the Brit. Museum*, vol. I, col. 670.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning the סהרורי who bore the name Shihāb ud-Dīn Yahya ibn Ḥabash, see Ḥajī Khalfa, II, pp. 419-20.

<sup>6</sup> On Ibn Kammunah see Leo Hirschfeld, *Sa'd b. Manṣūr ibn Kammunah und seine polemische Schrift تنقيح الابحاث للملل الثلاث* (Berlin, 1893); also Ignaz Goldziher, *Sa'd b. Manṣūr ibn Kammūna's Abhandlung über die Unvergänglichkeit der Seele*.

cloud<sup>1</sup>." This appears to be a euphemism for the living. If so, 'Alā ud-Dīn was a contemporary of Kammunah (thirteenth century).

On fol. 63 a:—

פצל מן כחאב מראצד אל מקאצד<sup>2</sup> לאחיר אל דין אל אבהרי ראע

Another quotation from the מראצד אל מקאצד of Athīr ud-Dīn begins on fol. 153 b; and on fol. 217 b:—

קאל צאחב מראצד אלמקאצד פי אלנפס אלנאסאנייה

On fol. 90 a the Commentator mentions מואיף אלמעטולה מן מואיף אלמסלמין.

The quotations from Jewish writers embodied in the work will be given in full under section C, and we may now note down the scribe's colophon, as given on fol. 272 b of the MS.:—

יקול אלפקיר אלי אללה אלמרתני לרחמֶה אללה סעיד אבן דאוד נע  
אלעדני אֲנִי כתבת הודא מן נסכה מחררה ונדרתהא פי מדינה חלב מן כט  
רב' דוד הנגיד בר' יהושע הנגיד ברב' אברהם הנגיד בר' דוד הנגיד בר'  
אברהם הנגיד בר' משה הגאון בר' מימון הדיין זלל:

ואסאל כל מן אטלע עלי הודא אן תאכזה אלדרשה ואלגירה ויסעא פי  
טלב אלעלום אלחקיקייה אלנצרייה פכיה הודא אלשכין אלשארח אקתצב  
הודא אלשרח אלגליל אלעצים אלמקדאר והו מן ישמעאל אלדי ליסהם מן  
אלמוציין בשי ונחנא אלמוציין באלעלום ואלמעארף עלי הודא אלמאר  
יתחסר בן אדם ען חאל ישראל פי הודא אלזמאן פיא נאימין אנתבהו ושלום  
על כל בני ברית . פען הודא יקאל . . . . .<sup>3</sup>

Says he who is poor towards God, who desireth the mercy of God, Sa'īd ibn Dā'ūd (may his soul be in paradise) al-'Adanī, Behold, I have copied this from a well-written text which I have found in the city of Aleppo, in the handwriting of our master David han-

<sup>1</sup> This phrase seems to embody a play on the name Kammunah (كُمُون meaning cummin). Cp. the phrase quoted in Dozy (under اسقيك يا كُمُون سقي), which, however, has the meaning of *jamais*.

<sup>2</sup> I have so far not been able to find any trace of this work in the Arabic Catalogues and Bibliographies which I have consulted.

<sup>3</sup> A leaf or more must be missing here.

Nagid, the son of our master Jehoshua han-Nagid, the son of our master Abraham han-Nagid, the son of our master David han-Nagid, the son of our master Abraham han-Nagid, the son of our master Moses hag-Gaon, the son of our master Maimun had-Dayyan, may the remembrance of the righteous be blessed.

And I will ask every one who may read that trembling and zeal should take hold of him, so that he may occupy himself with the search after true theoretical knowledge. Considering how this person, the Commentator, extemporized<sup>1</sup> this great and mighty Commentary, he belonging to the Ishmaelites to whom no commandments had been given. But we are they who have been commanded in the matters of knowledge and understanding. On account of this matter may one indeed sigh concerning the condition of Israel at the present time. And oh, ye sleeping ones, awake! And may peace be upon all the sons of the covenant. And concerning this shall be said . . . .

On fol. 273 (in a different hand):—

תפלת הרמבם זל"ה יסוד היסודות וסוד הסודות תהלתו דומיה . . .  
אחד ושמו אחד

The page is mutilated.

On fol. 2 a are given dates (in the same hand as the bulk of the MS., or, at any rate, by a contemporary scribe) according to six different eras, which are, however, only partly legible:—

לחרבן ראשון	ליציאת מצרים	ליצירה
(1889) אהתפ"ט	.....	.....
לחרבן שני	לשטרות	לסלוק הנבואה
(1398) אשצ"ח	(1778) אתשע"ח	(1778) אתשע"ח

The dates according to the eras of contracts and the destruction of the second Temple answer to A. D. 1466–7. According to this the destruction of the first Temple took place B. C. 422–3; which is, of course, erroneous. It is noticeable that the cessation of prophecy here synchronizes with the era of contracts<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> אקזמפוזיצ; but hardly applicable here.

<sup>2</sup> On the Rabbinic tradition that Malachi belongs to the time of Alexander the Great, see Ed. König in the *Expository Times* for March, 1899, p. 205 sqq. The subject may, perhaps, be found to deserve further investigation.

About the middle of the same page are some lines, headed ללכהורדי ראע, which are, however, partly illegible.

## C.

In this section the quotations from Jewish authors found in the MS. will be given in the order in which they occur.

I. A portion of Joseph ibn 'Aknin's *Tib al-Nufus*. On the Oxford MS. see M. Güdemann, *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen* (Wien, 1873), Beilage I, pp. 1-57 (Das 27. Kapitel aus dem *Tab ul-Nufus* des Joseph ben Aknin aus Barcelona [Neub., *Cat.*, No. 1273, 1]); see also Hirsch-Edelmann, *דברי חפץ*, part i.

II. A quotation in Arabic from Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch.

III. A hitherto unknown portion of Tanḥum Yerushalmi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs.

IV. A quotation from Abraham Maimuni's Commentary on the Pentateuch.

V. An abstract of a response on the life that follows death, by the same.

## I. (Add. 27,294, fol. 39 a sqq.)

וקאל ר' יוסף בן עקינן פי מקאלה טב אלנפוס קאלו רבותינו ז'ל כל הנביאים כולם נסתכלו באספקלריא שאינה מאירה ומשה רבינו ע'ה נסתכל באספקלריא המאירה ותפסיר ספקלריא משכך אלנטר מן מעני ספק לראיה מן לשון נומריקון אי אלשי אלפאצל בין אלנאצר ואלמנצור אליה חתי ישכך פיהמא לו אזאל דלך אלפאצל ארתפע אלשך ואלחנאב אלדי כאן למרע[ה] הו חנאב אלגסר אלדי ימנע מן אן יתצל בבאריה כמא קלנא פי תפסיר כי לא יראני האדם וחי ואמא מעקולאתה פכאנת מעקולאת באלפעל עלי מא קלנא פי ויחזו את האלהים פצארת נפסה אלנאטקה . . . .<sup>1</sup> מפארקה ללגסר והדא הו מעני קולה . . . .<sup>1</sup> וראית את אחורי ופני לא יראו אראד בהדא . . . .<sup>1</sup> אלת אלגסר והדא הו מעני קולה תע' והסירותי את כפי אראד אסתנאאה ען אלת אלגסר

<sup>1</sup> MS. damaged.

אלכתיפה אלחאנבה בין [אל] נפס ואלאתצאל באלמלכות אלעלי והו נור באריהא פשבה אלגסד באלסחאב אלסאתר לנור אלשמס ענא פארדאן אן אדא אפתרקת נפסה מן אלגסד צארת מעקולאתהא אלתי כאנת באלפעל פי רתבה קריבה מן אלפעאל פחצלת פי רתבה אעלי ממא כאנת ועקלת מנה תע' מא לא ימכנהא אן תעקלה מנה עלי מא כאנת עליה פי צחבתהא ללגסד תם אעלם אן מע כונהא כמלת פאנהא לא ימכנהא אן תצל מן אלכמאל אן תעקל מנה תע' מא יעקל הו מן דאתה ולו בעד מפארקתהא ללמאדה והדא הו מעני קולה וראית את אחורי ופני לא יראו אי אנמא תעקל מני מתל מא יעקל אלגסדאן מן צאחבה אלדי לא ירי ונהא אלא ראי מנה טהרה פתכון מערפתך בי נאקצה ען מערפתי בדאתי ומעני קולה והיה בעבור כבודי ושמותיך בנקרת הצור אעלם אן פי וקת פיין נור אלפעאל אלדי הו כבודו עליהא . . . <sup>1</sup> נקרת הצור אלדי הו . . . <sup>1</sup> אנמא תתעלם ותקתני אלפצאיל מן אל . . . <sup>1</sup> ואלכלקיה פי וקת כונהא מצאחבה ללגסד לאן בעולם הזה תקתני אלפצאיל לתצעד לעולם הבא וכמא קאלו רבותי ז'ל העולם הזה דומה לפרוזדור לעולם הבא התקן עצמן בפרוזדור כדי שתכנסם למרקלין ויריד בקולה וסכותי אלדי שרח אללפץ ונצלל בחסאבי <sup>2</sup> . . . <sup>3</sup> אבתדי תעלימך יכון פי וקת כונך בינך ובין כבודי סאתר והי אלות אלגסד ותתדרג קלילא קלילא חתי יזול דלך אלחאנאב אלסאתר ותסתגני נפסך ען אלותהא ותציר בריה מן אלמאדה ותתשבה באלרוחאניין פיכון מעקולאתה באלפעל ויריד בקולה עד עברי חתי יחצל מערפה דאתי פי כאטרך בחסב מא ימכנך אדראכה פמעני קולה מרעה נסתכל באספקלריה המאירה אי חאנבה אלתי לם יבקי בינה ובין באריה אלא הו והו אלגסד וכאנת נפסה אלנאטקה מאירה אי צפת נפסה פי חאל כונהא מצאחבה לגסדהא חתי צארת גניה ען אלותהא פי חיז אלמתבריה מן אלמאדה בטאעה קואה כלהא בקותה אלנאטקה ולמא . . . <sup>3</sup> פצאיל אלנטיקיה ואלכלקיה כלהא באגמעהם . . . עלם חקיקה וגודה פקאל הראיני נא את כבודך . . . <sup>3</sup> דלך פי אלמאכאן פאעלמה תע' אן הדא ניר ממכך . . . <sup>3</sup> עקלה מוגוד מע מקארנה אלמאדה אעני מן חית הו אנסאן והו קולה תע' כי לא יראני האדם וחי ועלי מא קאלו רזל פי שרח כי לא יראני האדם וחי בחייהו אינם רואים במיתתם הם רואים אלי הנהא אנתהי כלאמה זל

<sup>1</sup> MS. damaged.<sup>2</sup> Read בסחאבי, "with my cloud."<sup>3</sup> MS. indistinct.

## II. (Fol. 86 a.)

אמא קול אלפאצל ה'אבצ זל פי פירוש התורה לאן אל חק אן אלכל  
יעלם כל ג'זי' עלי טריק כל לא עלי טריק ג'זי' פה' עין מדהב ארסטו ולכן  
פיה מעני לטיף פי אסקאט אלכלי ואלג'זי' ואסתעמאל אלכל ואלג'זי' מכאנהמא  
ואלפרק בינהמא טאהר מן אן אלכלי יקום אלג'זי' אלדי תחתה ואלכל יתקום  
באלג'זי' .

## III. (Fol. 94 a.)

פעל מן כלאם רת'זל מן שרח משלי . קאל אן אלאמור אלכפיה ואלאסראר  
אלאלאה'ה' אלואגב כפאהא עמן לס יטיק פהם סרהא כמא קאל אלחכים כבוד  
אלהים הסתר דבר וכבוד מלכים חקור דבר . חם למא כשי נסיאנהא פתעדס  
מנאפעאה פכתבת ללכת' ען חקאיקהא וללתפת'יש ען מקאצדהא כמא קאל  
וכבוד מלכים חקור דבר פאלאול מ'נע מן אלג'מהור וען מן לא יטיקה  
פאכפי . ואלתאני כתב למן להו עליה קוה תבאת ואסתילא בעקלה עלי כ'יאלה  
וקהר שהואת'ה פסמאהם מלכים וקאל בעד דלך שמים לרום וארץ לעומק  
ולב מלכים אין חקר וקדם אולא אן מן אלמכלוקא'ת מא הי כפ'ה עזי'ה  
אלאדראך שריפה אלד'ת יבני . . . . .<sup>1</sup> ריאצה וקדרה עלי דלך והי  
אלאמור אלאלאה'ה' אלמעקולה אלתי קאל ענהא כבוד אלהים הסתר דבר  
ומנהא מא הי דון דלך ונודעה טאהר והי אלתי יג'זי' ללפעלא אלאלגלא אלכחת  
פי אמרהא ומערפה מאהיאתהא ואלאטלאע עלי אסבאב חרכאת'הא וטהור  
את'ארהא וצדור מא יצדר ענהא ופיהא<sup>2</sup> ובהא<sup>2</sup> והי אלדי קאל ענהא וכבוד  
מלכים חקור דבר . פקאל בעד דלך אן הדא אלקסם אלת'אני הו איצא קסמין  
ומע בינהמא אנסאם טאהרין ללחואס וצפאת'הא טאהרה . פאחד'המא שריף  
רפיע אלג'והר עאלי אלמרת'בה מחיט במא דונה . ואלת'אני בעיד ענה פי  
אלשרפה מנחט אלמרת'בה פי אספל אלמרכז כת'ף אלמאדה ויעם אלקסמין  
אנהמא דו נהאיה מ'ז'זין נאקצין באלנסבה ללקסם אלזכר . ואמא דלך  
אלקסם אלאלא לא ידרך אלא באלקלוב אלצפה ואלעקול אלואפיה ולים לה  
נהאיה יוצל אליהא ולא נא'יה ימכן אלוקוף עליהא . ונעוד לכלאם אלשארח וכו'

## IV. (Fol. 166 a.)

פעל קאל רבינו אברהם בן הנאון רבי' משה ז'צל פי שרח אלתורה פי קו'  
ואד יעלה מן הארץ: א'ד אסם אלככאר אלג'ליין אלמתראקי מן אלארץ

<sup>1</sup> MS. not distinct.<sup>2</sup> Omit one of these two words.

מנה אשתק פי ספר איוב מטר לאדו ביין לנא בראלך מארה אלמטר ותלדה אנה מן אבברה גליצה תתראקי מן אלספל בעד חצול אלאמתזאנ ותלך אלאבברה מרכבה מן ארבע אסתקצאת עלי מא שרח לנא אלבחר אלעלמי בהראיה יהב חכמא<sup>1</sup> לחכימין אלאזלב פי מזאנ תלך אלארבעה חי אלסמטקן אלהואי ודונה אלסמטקן אלמאיי פתרתפע תלך אלאבברה במא פיהא מן אלסמטקן אלהואי ואלנארי ותתלסף פי אלגו ויתכלץ מנה אגל אלהואי ואלנארי טאלעא<sup>2</sup> טאלבן כל מנהא גהה אסתקצה תם יתמיי אלמאיי ומא יצחבה מן אלארצי מע בקאיי יסירה פי אלאמתזאנ מן אלנארי ואלהואי אלדין אתחדא פי חאל אלאמתזאנ: פינצב דאלך אלתימיי מן אלאבברה אלצאעדה נאזלא טאלבא גהה אסתקצה פיסקי פי נוולה אלארץ ויריחא:

# V. (Fol. 257 b sqq.)

תלזין לרבי אברהם בן הנאון רבי משה זל פי גואב מסאיל . . . .  
בעד אלמות \*

קאל מעלום ענד מן נצר פי אלעלם אלטביעי וחצל ראי אלפלסאפה פי אלמאדה ואלצורה ואלכונ ואלפסאר אן פסאר אלמאדה אלדי ישירון אליה לים הו תלאשי אלמאדה ופסארהא בל כלעהא אלצורה אלתי כאנת פיהא ולבסהא צורה אכרי פאלפסאר אלעארץ ללאנסאן ענד אלמות לים הו תלאשי מא פיה ודהאבה בל מפארה צורתה למאדתה ותלך אלצורה אלמפארהא אמה אן יכונ חצל להא פי חאל מקארנתהא לאלמאדה כמאל ואסתקלאל בראתהא תתי לא תבקי מפתרה פי וגדאנהא אלי מאדה: ואמה אן לא יכונ חצל להא דאלך פאן כאן חצל לה אלכמאל ואלאסתקלאל אלמשאר אליה פהי תבקי בעד אלמפארה ניר מקארנה למאדה ותדהב נמיע קואהא אלתי לא יצח להא בקא דון אלה כאלקוי אלחסייה ונחוא ויבקי מנהא אלגור אלמסתקל בראתה אלגני פי וגודה ען אלמאדה כאלעקול אלמפארה ופהם דאלך עלי מא הו עליה עויץ במרה כפהם חיקה אלמפארה נמיעהא ואמה אן לא יכונ חצל לאלצורה אלאנסאניה אסתקלאל בראתה בל דאתהא מתעלקה באלמאדה תעלק אלצור אלתי לא יצח להא וגור דון מאדה פהי תדהב ותתלאשי ענד אלמות כתלאשי אלחיואן אלגיר נאטק היא הו אלמתלכין מן ראיחם \*

<sup>1</sup> For חכמא (Dan. ii. 23).

<sup>2</sup> Note the expression of the nunation by an actual ן, as against טאלעא which precedes.



## D.

TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>.

## I.

And Rabbi Joseph b. 'Aknīn said in a Maḳalah<sup>2</sup> in *Tib al-Nufūs*:—Our teachers, blessed be their memory, said that all the prophets looked through a non-transparent medium<sup>3</sup>, whilst Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, looked through a transparent medium<sup>3</sup>. And the explanation of ספק לראיה is “making doubtful the vision,” derived from the phrase ספק לראיה<sup>4</sup> by way of the figure known as “Notaricum”; that is to say, the thing which forms a division between him who looks and that which is looked at, so that doubtfulness arises between them. If this dividing thing were removed, the doubt would also be lifted. And the veil on Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, was the veil of the flesh which prevents man from being joined to his Creator, as we have said in our comment on the verse: “For no man can see me and live” (Exod. xxxiii. 20). And as for his [spiritual] perceptions, they were actual ones, in accordance with what we have said on the verse: “And they saw God” (Exod. xxiv. 11). For his rational soul . . . became dissociated from the body, this being the meaning of the verse . . . “And thou shalt see my back, but my face may not be seen” (Exod. xxxiii. 23). He meant by this . . . the instruments of the body. This is also the meaning of: “And I shall remove my hand” (ibid.). He signified thereby that she (i.e. the soul) will dispense with the gross bodily instruments which form a partition between the soul and her union with supernal royalty, namely the light of her Creator. And he likened the body to a cloud which hides from us the light of the sun. He signified thereby that when his soul became dissociated from the body, his perceptions, which were already actually of a more than usually exalted kind, reached a still higher degree, and she perceived things pertaining to God which she could not have perceived in her association with the body. But also know that, though thus perfected, she could not reach a degree of perfection by which to perceive as much of the essence of God as he perceives himself, not even as a consequence of her dissociation from the body. This is the meaning of: “And thou shalt see my back, but my face

<sup>1</sup> The remarks made on p. 494 on the linguistic peculiarities of the Arabic and on the translation also apply to these portions.

<sup>2</sup> The text is rather, “in the Maḳalah *Tib al-Nufūs*.”

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “a non-illuminingspeculum,” and “an illuminingspeculum.”

<sup>4</sup> This explanation shows that a good philosopher may be a bad philologist.

may not be seen"; that is to say, thou wilt only perceive me as a man perceives a companion whose face he does not see, but only his back. Thy knowledge of me will therefore fall short of my knowledge of myself. As for the meaning of the verse: "And it shall come to pass that when my glory passes by, I shall place thee in the cleft of the rock" (Exod. xxxiii. 22), know that at the time in which the light of realities, or the divine glory, was diffused upon her . . . the cleft of the rock which is . . . she may only know and acquire the excellences of . . . and ethical, at the time of her being associated with the body; for she may acquire excellences in this world, in order thus to step up into the world to come, as our teachers, blessed be their memory, have said: "This world is like a fore-court to the world to come; prepare thyself in the fore-court, so as to enter the inner hall." And by saying: "And I shall cover" (ibid.), which is rendered by "And I shall overshadow with my cloud" . . . The beginning of thy understanding will take place when there is yet something to hide my glory from thee, namely the instruments of the body; and thou shalt then progress gradually, until the hiding veil be removed, when thy soul will dispense with her instruments, and thou shalt become free of matter, and be like unto spiritual existences. Her perceptions will thus become actual ones. By saying, "Until I pass by" (ibid.) he means, until the knowledge of my essence obtained by thy understanding shall reach the degree of apprehension possible to it. And when it is said that "Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, looked through a transparent medium," what is meant by it is the division which alone remained between him and his Creator, namely the body; for his rational soul, that is to say, the quality of his soul, became luminous, even whilst associated with the body, so as to dispense with her instruments on account of her freedom from matter by the submission of all her powers to her rational power. And when . . . the sum-total of her rational and ethical excellences . . . the knowledge of the actuality of his existence. And he said: "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory" (Exod. xxxiii. 18) . . . this by way of possibility. And God, exalted be he, told him that this was not possible . . . his created understanding, on account of its association with matter, that is to say, on account of his being man. This is the signification of the saying: "For no man can see me and live" (Exod. xxxiii. 20); this being also in accordance with what our teachers, blessed be their memory, have said in their comment on: "For no man can see me and live," their remark being that in their life they cannot see, but in their death they can see. So far his remarks, blessed be his memory.

## II.

As for the remark of the eminent master, Abraham b. Ezra, blessed be his memory, in his Commentary on the Torah, to the effect that "the whole apprehends the partial (or sectional) in a universal and not in a sectional manner," this is in accordance with the system of Aristotle. But therein is a subtle meaning tending to the discarding of the terms "universal" and "sectional," and the substitution for them of the terms "whole" and "part." The difference between the two sets of terms is clear, because the universal establishes the sectional which is comprehended in it, whereas the whole is established by the part.

## III.

A chapter from Rabbi Tanhum Yerushalmi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs. He said that the secret of hidden things and of divine mysteries which should remain closed to us cannot be comprehended, as the wise man has said: "It is the glory of God to hide a thing, and the glory of kings to search it out" (Prov. xxv. 2). Then, on account of the fear of their being forgotten, and thus occasioning the loss of their benefits, they were written down, so that their realities might be investigated and their purposes searched out, as he said: "And it is the glory of kings to search out a thing." It was first withdrawn from the multitude and from him who cannot master it, and it was hidden. And it was next written down for those who have firm power over it, whose mind rules over their imagination, and who conquer their desires. Such persons he called kings. After this he said: "The heavens for height, and the earth for depth, but the heart of kings is unsearchable" (Prov. xxv. 3). He first said that those created things which are hidden, difficult to search, and exalted in nature, should . . . mastery and power over them, these being the divine intellectual things concerning which he said: "It is the glory of God to hide a thing." But some of these things lie lower, whose existence is plain. It is these which eminent men should lay bare, investigate their details, understand their qualities, and show the causes of their movements, the marks of their vestiges, and the consequences arising from them and within them. Of these he said: "It is the glory of kings to search out things." After this he said that this second division consists of two subdivisions, although they both are bodies that are apparent to the senses, whose qualities are also apparent. The one subdivision is of an exalted and lofty substance, of a high category, embracing that which lies below it. The second is removed from it in point of exaltation, of a lower category in the universe, of gross matter.

Both these subdivisions have this in common that they are finite, circumscribed, and lacking in comparison to the other division. As for this first-named division, it can only be comprehended by pure hearts and perfect minds. It has no end that can be reached, nor has it a boundary that can be investigated. *Let us now return to the words of the Commentator.*

## IV.

A Faṣl (chapter). Said our master Abraham, son of the Gaon, our master Moses, the memory of the righteous be for a blessing, in his Commentary on the Torah, on the verse: "And a mist rose up from the earth" (Gen. ii. 6): The word **טל** is the name of the thick vapour which rises up from the earth. From this is derived the phrase: "Which distil rain for the vapour thereof," in the Book of Job (xxxvi. 27). The substance of the rain and its mode of being engendered is explained to us therein, namely that it is produced by thick mists which rise up from below after the confluence [of the elements]. And these mists are composed of the four elements in accordance with the explanation given by the "sea of knowledge<sup>1</sup>," on "He giveth wisdom to the wise" (Dan. ii. 21). The most potent in the composition of these four is the ærial element, and next to it is the watery element. And these mists are lifted up by the force of the ærial and fiery elements that are in them. And they become thinned in the aether. And the greater part of the ærial and fiery elements escape therefrom, rising up, each of them seeking out the direction of its own element. Then becomes loosened the watery element, together with what clings to it of the earthy element, as well as the small quantities of the fiery and ærial elements which remained absorbed in the composition. And this loosed portion of the rising mists begins to pour down, falling and seeking the direction of its [main] element; and in its fall it waters the earth and permeates it.

## V.

A *résumé* of our master Abraham, son of the Gaon, our master Moses, blessed be his memory, of a response to questions . . . . after death.

He said: Those who have studied natural science and assimilated the views of the philosophers on matter and form<sup>2</sup>, and on existence

<sup>1</sup> An honorific title given to the author of the Commentary on Daniel referred to.

<sup>2</sup> In the term "form" is, of course, included the mind-power (the archetypal ideas of Plato) by which matter assumes an organic formation expressive of the immaterial residing in the matter.

and dissolution, know that the dissolution of matter to which they refer does not involve cessation of existence for the material substance, nor its destruction; but only the removal of the form which it had and the putting on of another form. Thus also the dissolution which befalls man at death does not involve the cessation of existence for that which is in him, nor its passing away, but only the separation between his material substance and its form. And the essence of this separated form may either have acquired perfection and refinement during its union with matter, so that it may not require [further union with] it in its [new] existence; or it may not have acquired this. If it has acquired the above-mentioned perfection and refinement, it remains disjoined from matter after its separation from it. In this case there pass away the totality of those of its powers which can have no continuance without instruments, such as the powers of the senses and the like<sup>1</sup>, and there only remains the substance in its refined essence whose existence is independent of matter, such as the abstract powers of the intellect. The comprehension of this process is—so far as its intellectual difficulties are concerned—on a par with the comprehension of all abstract verities. But if the essence of the human form has not acquired [spiritual] refinement, but still tends to cling to matter, then those formal functions which cannot exist without matter still adhere [to matter], but [finally] pass away and come to nought like the non-rational beast. This is a brief *résumé* of the philosophers' view.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the thoughts presented here might almost pass as an explanation of the "Nirwana" of Buddhism.